

WASHINGTON, DC— Today, May 7, 2009, the House Armed Services Committee marked-up the WASTE TKO Act, a bipartisan major weapon systems acquisition reform bill introduced by Chairman Skelton and Ranking Member McHugh and approved two amendments submitted by Congressman Sestak. These amendments provide further oversight and accountability to our acquisition process, which has a long history of waste and unreliability.

“I am proud to support this vital piece of legislation,” the Congressman said at his office in Washington on Thursday afternoon. “The Department of Defense acquisition process requires overhaul. Lead times are longer than ever and costs continue to escalate. In what seems a self-fulfilling prophecy, the services appear to under-budget as programs are presented to Congress for approval, only to overrun those budgets during execution.”

The WASTE TKO Act counters these fiscal calamities by designating oversight functionaries who serve as principal advisors for cost estimation, systems engineering, and performance assessment on each program. The bill also contains provisions which place more scrutiny on certification requirements and review of programs which have experienced critical cost growth, allowing such programs to be restructured to minimize further cost growth. Additionally, it seeks to prevent organizational conflicts of interest in the acquisition of major weapons systems and creates incentives for superior performance by defense acquisitions personnel.

Congressman Sestak’s amendments add to these crucial measures. The first amendment mandates the disclosure of confidence levels for baseline estimates of major defense acquisition programs. If the confidence level is below 80 percent, the amendment requires that the official designated to perform cost estimation oversight provide a justification. This creates pressure to budget cost estimates as accurately as possible.

The Congressman’s second amendment requires that before a program which has experienced a critical cost growth can be restructured, the Secretary of Defense must assess the need to reduce funding for other programs due to the cost growth on such program and must certify to Congress that the troubled program is a higher priority than other programs whose funding must be reduced to accommodate cost growth.

“The Department of Defense acquisition process must be reformed to ensure taxpayers receive a fair value for their dollar and warfighters receive capable systems on time and within budgets” said the Congressman. “This legislation will further these vital objectives, and I am proud to support it.”

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s

anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.